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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Note verbale dated 26 May 2014 from the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations Office and Other International Organizations in Geneva, addressed to the President of the Human Rights Council

The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations Office and Other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the President of the Human Rights Council and, further to its previous notes concerning the current situation in the Syrian Arab Republic has the honour to attach hereto a letter from the Chargé d'Affaires of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic addressed to the President of the Human Rights Council concerning the terrorist attack on civilians in the Syrian city of Dar'a.

The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic requests that this note and the attached letter be issued and circulated in the official languages of the United Nations as a document of the twenty-sixth session of the Human Rights Council.

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Annex

I am writing to you concerning a new massacre to which the Syrian Arab people have been subjected at the hands of terrorist groups supported from abroad. On 22 May 2014, those groups deliberately fired mortar shells at a densely packed gathering of civilians in a popular residential neighbourhood in the city of Dar'a where citizens had gathered to spontaneously express their condemnation of terrorism and their loyalty to their homeland. Thirty-nine civilians, including women and children, were killed and some 205 others were wounded, 14 of whom are in a critical condition, as a result of that mortar bombardment.

This horrific massacre constitutes only one episode in the endless series of deliberate crimes against Syrians, their property, beliefs and civilization and their country's infrastructure with a view to destroying this civilization and transforming Syria into a State submerged in the ignorance of the Dark Ages, in which there would be no human dignity and human life would have no value. Syrian cities are being subjected on a daily basis to a barrage of shells targeting schools, hospitals, places of worship and any civilian gathering with a view to causing the largest possible number of victims and thereby terrorizing and preventing them from leading their normal daily lives.

These crimes receive direct support and legal, political and media coverage from a number of regional and other States, particularly Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Turkey, France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America which are backing those armed terrorist groups and their obscurantist ideology, arming and training them and providing them with shelter. Those States are continuing to evade liability for their acts by holding the Syrian Government responsible therefor or by inventing designations, definitions and concepts to differentiate between "good and bad' terrorism" as part of their shameful and hypocritical practice of double standards. They have attempted to implant terrorist obscurantist ideology in Syria on the assumption that they themselves would be immune to it. However, it has now returned to proliferate in the very States that supported and nurtured it and which are now calling for the holding of meetings and conferences to discuss means to prevent it from returning to their countries, from which they exported it, out of fear of the spread of such terrorist obscurantist ideology in their territories. They have condoned for Syria's children what they do not today condone for their own children. In this regard, the question is: will they differentiate between a bad and a good "moderate" terrorist when he returns to practise his "moderate terrorism" in their countries?

United Nations officials, and primarily the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, are still acting in accordance with the agendas of those States, preparing the ground for military intervention in Syria and issuing gratuitous declarations and reports to achieve the aims of those States. They are continuing to distort the facts and fan the flames of the anti-Syrian campaign in a way that is totally incompatible not only with their obligation to defend human rights in an impartial, professional and honest manner but also with their obligation to encourage any positive step, including the successive conciliation endeavours in various Syrian cities, in a manner conducive to a peaceful solution, the cessation of bloodshed and the restoration of security and stability in Syria.

The massacre that occurred in Dar'a on 22 May 2014 violated the most fundamental human right, namely the right to life, in addition to the right to freedom of expression, the right to freedom of assembly and the rights of women, who were taking part in that popular gathering. These violations of human rights will not enjoy impunity under Syrian law, which is sovereign in this regard; they will make the Syrian Government even more determined to fulfil its legal and constitutional duty to protect its people from this obscurantist terrorism.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic calls upon the Human Rights Council, through you, to condemn this horrific crime and to demand that the States sponsoring the terrorist groups discontinue their support for those groups. Syria also requests that the Council's duly mandated Special Rapporteurs issue an unequivocal condemnation of this odious massacre.